
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education
Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts

WORLD EXPERTS IN B.C. TO DISCUSS HEALTHY SCHOOLS

VANCOUVER – More than 100 international delegates are in Vancouver this week to discuss the best ways to promote student health, and to look at innovative programs underway in British Columbia's schools, Education Minister Shirley Bond, and Minister of State for ActNow BC Gordon Hogg said today.

"It's clear that students need to be healthy if they are to achieve their full potential," said Bond. "With this conference, we're seeing B.C.'s school system at the forefront of the worldwide effort to help students become healthier."

The delegates are part of the World Health Organization studying health promotion in schools, including effective school health programs such as B.C.'s Healthy Schools initiative, along with other topics, including the effect of media on the health of children. The provincial government is also working with the WHO as it conducts an independent evaluation of ActNow BC and the Healthy Schools initiative.

"With ActNow BC, Action Schools BC and the Healthy Schools initiative, this government is making real changes to the way students and families see their health," said Hogg. "This conference is an opportunity for us to share our successes and learn from those of other nations as we continue to make B.C. a better, healthier place to live."

Over 30 countries are represented at the June 5-8 meetings. One of the highlights of the conference is a tour today of Braemar elementary school in North Vancouver where delegates will see firsthand how the Healthy Schools program works.

The meetings are co-hosted by the WHO and Canada's Joint Consortium for School Health. The consortium, led by British Columbia, allows provincial, territorial and federal governments to coordinate their school health promotion efforts by sharing effective solutions, knowledge, research funding and support.

One of the featured presenters is Dr. Lawrence St. Leger, professor of Health and Social Development at Deakin University in Australia. St. Leger is a renowned expert in the field of health promotion and education.

"Our children can only choose health if they understand the need and the possibilities before them," said St. Leger. "This conference and British Columbia's valuable partnership are part of the global effort to bring healthier choices and a better life to all the people and countries of the world."

- 2 -

Since 1995, the WHO has worked to build health education awareness with countries around the globe. The work of this conference, along with ActNow BC, Action Schools BC and Healthy Schools initiatives support the Province's Pacific Leadership Agenda to improve health for our students, citizens and renew our public health care system.

Since 2001, the province has provided over \$30 million to build better knowledge and healthy choices for children in schools. ActNow BC is a partnership-based, cross-ministry health and wellness initiative that promotes healthy living choices to improve the quality of life for all British Columbians. For more information on healthy living, see the ActNow BC website at www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca.

-30-

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